

Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions [FDLC]

Mystagogical Reflection on Texts of the *Roman Missal*

Link to Mystagogy Project on FDLC home page for free access and use: <http://www.fdlc.org>.

Mystagogical Reflections on the Collect & Prayer after Communion: 24th -30th Sundays in Ordinary Time 2016

MYSTAGOGY ON THE MASS TEXTS FOR SUNDAYS, SOLEMNITIES, AND HOLYDAYS

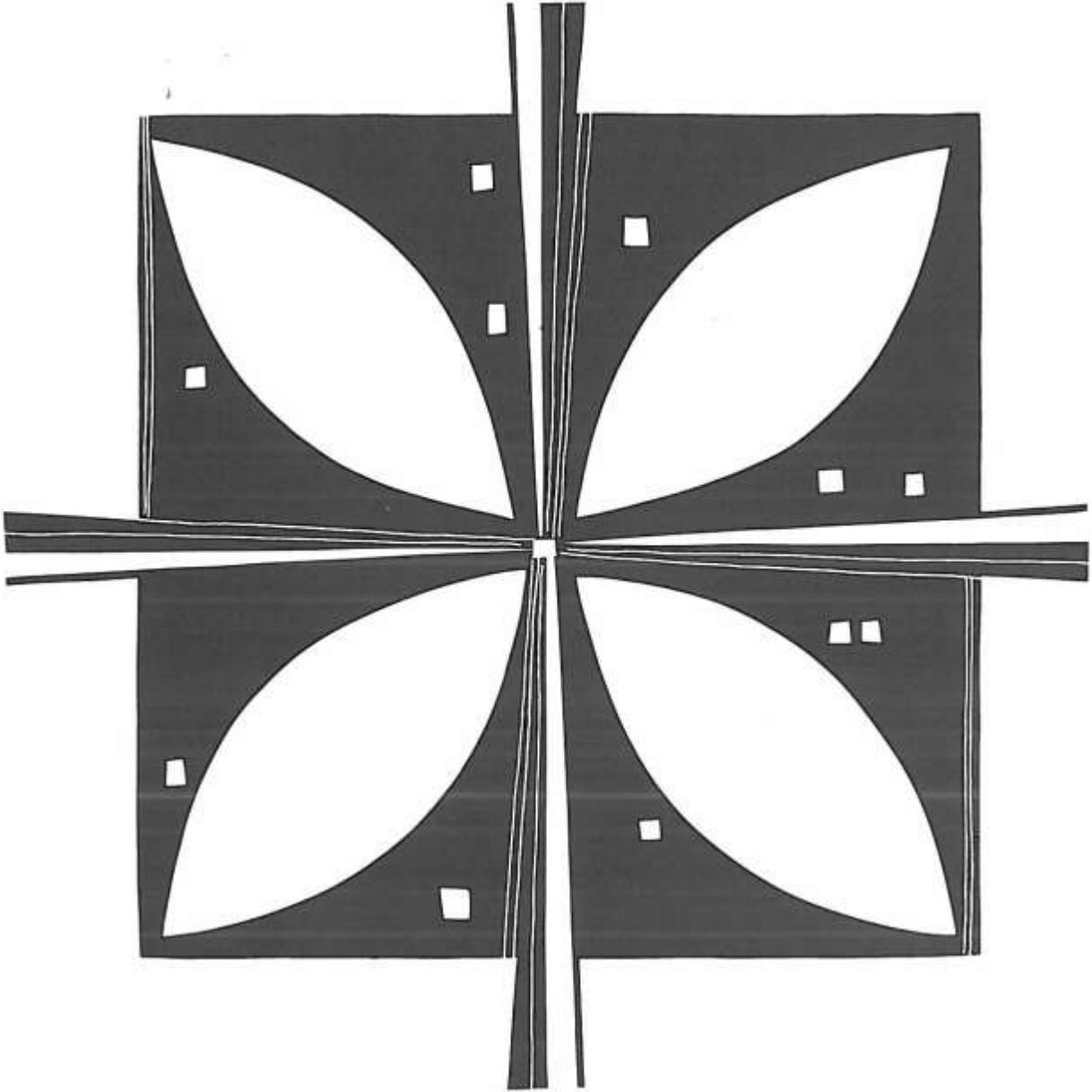
"Mystagogy", simply put, is the study of mystery. For Christians, it focuses on the Paschal Mystery of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is an ancient and beloved Church method for reflecting on the experiences of worship, prayer, and the Christian life.

Collect or Opening Prayer	Prayer after Communion
<p>The Collect is introduced by the words "Let us pray" and followed by a few moments of silence to allow us to quietly compose our own prayers. These are then gathered or "collected" by the Priest and offered to God through Jesus Christ.</p> <p>Catherine Combier-Donovan Archdiocese of Baltimore</p>	<p>The single purpose of the Prayer after Communion is to recapitulate in prayer every word, action, and belief that has led us to (and will soon send us from) the Eucharist fashioned (by profound sacred words and actions) and received by those gathered. Although not words of our choosing, but rather those supplied by the Church, it attempts to verbally express what we have experienced and believe.</p> <p>Father Jim Bessert Diocese of Saginaw</p>



The Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions [FDLC] formed an Ad Hoc Committee for Mystagogical Reflection. The committee task is to provide help for reflecting on texts of the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*. The 2013 effort focused on the Collect or Opening Prayer for Sunday, Solemnity, and Holyday Masses. The 2014 work addressed the Prayer after Communion with implications for discipleship. This work is on the FDLC website in PDF: <http://www.fdlc.org> – click the Mystagogical Reflections button.

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Over the course of the year
the Church celebrates the whole mystery of Christ,
from the Incarnation to Pentecost Day
and the days of waiting for the Advent of the Lord.

Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the General Roman Calendar [UNLYC], no. 17

ORDINARY TIME

24th-30th Sundays

Apart from those seasons having their own distinctive character, thirty-three or thirty-four weeks remain in the yearly cycle that do not celebrate a specific aspect of the mystery of Christ. Rather, especially on the Sundays, they are devoted to the mystery of Christ in all its aspects. This period is known as Ordinary Time.

Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the General Roman Calendar [UNLYC], no. 43

The Liturgical Day	Date	Page
TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	September 11, 2016	04-05
TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	September 18, 2016	06-07
TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	September 25, 2016	08-011
TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	October 02, 2016	12-13
TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	October 09, 2016	14-15
TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	October 16, 2016	16-17
THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	October 23, 2016	18-19



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TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Collect:

Look upon us, O God,
Creator and ruler of all things,
and, that we may feel the working of your mercy,
grant that we may serve you with all our heart.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Reflection:

“Grant that we may serve you with all our heart.” The Collect reminds us that our God is merciful. It recalls the covenant which was made with the people of Israel, “I am your God and you are my people.”

As children of God, we are called to be not only disciples but also caretakers of all that God has created. As a disciple and a caretaker, Jesus is saying to us, “You are covered by the blood of Christ, therefore you have no reason to be afraid to serve God and care for all of God’s creations.” We know, however, that living in this 21st century with all of its distractions and lack of concerns for one another makes our task of loving and serving God difficult at best. Today’s prayer reminds us that God has the power to change our lives.

Prayer:

Thank you, O God, for recognizing our needs. Thank you for the gift of love through your Son, Jesus Christ. Thank you for watching over us each and every day. Help us to love you more and help us to see your love in each other.

Submitted by:
Dr. Jessie Thomas
Pastoral Administrator
Holy Name Catholic Church
Archdiocese of Cincinnati

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TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Prayer after Communion:

May the working of this heavenly gift, O Lord, we pray,
take possession of our minds and bodies,
so that its effects, and not our own desires,
may always prevail in us.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection:

All too often, we receive Holy Communion in a perfunctory manner or by rote. In other words, we might not really think about it. Normally, we receive with grateful hearts the gift of Holy Communion, but we may not always be mindful of the implications of our “Amen.”

The Prayer after Communion for the Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time reminds us of the effect receiving this gift has on us. If we really pay attention, Holy Communion “works” in us and, as we consume Christ, Christ takes possession of us. The very act of eating and drinking his Body and Blood effects us, changes us. We pray that the effect empties us of human desires so that we may be drawn into the mystery of Christ, dying to our sinfulness and living the fullness of Christ every day of our lives.

Consequently, our lives are lived conformed to the mind and heart of Christ – in love, compassion, mercy, and humility.

Prayer:

Lord, may we always come to your table hungry, ready to receive the gift of the Body and Blood of your Son, Jesus Christ. May what we consume possess us so that we become what we eat for the life of the world.

Submitted by:
Karen Kane
Director of the Worship Office
Archdiocese of Cincinnati

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TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Collect:

O God, who founded all the commands of your sacred Law upon love of you and of our neighbor, grant that, by keeping your precepts, we may merit to attain eternal life. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Reflection:

Although this prayer is partly stitched together with bits of other texts from as early as the sixth century, it is a new Collect for the post-Vatican II missal (see Paul Turner, *Pastoral Companion to the Roman Missal*, © 2010, World Library Publications, p. 144).

I remember only one sermon from my grade school years of the 1950's. It was this short: "Look to those on your right and on your left. Go ahead, do it. Now look to those both in front and behind. (Pause.) If they don't get to heaven, you probably will not either." There was quite a silence in the church as the priest sat down.

Since love is the summary of all law, since love must be more than only of self, then I must love God and must love others. The journey to heaven depends on it. Like our ancestors in faith, we are saved as a people. The question should not only be, "Am I saved?" It must be, "Are we being saved?" The suitable answer, "Every day. We are in this together."

Prayer:

Loving God, instill in me a love so deep and so wide that there is always room for one more, for many more. Fill this pathway to you with lovers and with those to be loved so that heaven will be filled with a great throng that is, best of all, loved by you.

Submitted by:
Eliot Kapitan
Director for Worship and the Catechumenate
Diocese of Springfield in Illinois

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TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Prayer after Communion:

Graciously raise up, O Lord,
those you renew with this Sacrament,
that we may come to possess your redemption
both in mystery and in the manner of our life.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection:

The whole dynamic of this prayer has been in play throughout many of the texts of this Liturgy. For example, the Opening Collect makes reference to God's commands that are founded on love of him and on love of neighbor, and asks that by keeping the Lord's precepts, we might then have eternal life. Similarly, the first option for the Communion Antiphon asks that one's ways (i.e., one's manner of behaving, of acting, of living) be in keeping with God's statutes (Psalm 119:4-5). Even the readings in all three years, touch upon the call for all of us to live our lives in a manner that is in keeping with the demands of the Gospel.

This prayer then echoes these other texts. As so often in the Prayers after Communion, there is the recognition of the renewing and the refreshing power of the Sacrament. Thus renewed – in faith, in conviction, in the call of discipleship, in fidelity to our Baptism – we are later sent out (in the dismissal rite) “to announce the Gospel of the Lord.” How? According to the Prayer after Communion, by the very “manner of our life” – that is, in how we live!

In the end, this prayer raises for us the intimate link between Eucharist (the “mystery” referred to in the prayer) and life; between worship and discipleship; between sacrament and service. It is the link between Mystery and Mission. We could not possibly fulfill that Mission without the renewing power of the Eucharist; and the Mission of being disciples in the world repeatedly calls us back to participate in the Eucharist, which is the great mystery of our redemption!

Prayer:

Gracious Lord, may all that I do be rooted in and flow out of the great praise and thanksgiving that is the Eucharist. Renewed each time I do so, may I be sustained in my life as a disciple – to announce your Gospel and to glorify you, Lord, by the way I live my life. Through Christ our Lord.

Submitted by:
D. Todd Williamson
Director of the Office for Divine Worship
Archdiocese of Chicago

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TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Collect:

O God, who manifest your almighty power
above all by pardoning and showing mercy,
bestow, we pray, your grace abundantly upon us
and make those hastening to attain your promises
heirs to the treasures of heaven.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Reflection:

This Collect has a rich and varied use from the *Gelasian Sacramentary* forward (see Paul Turner, *Pastoral Companion to the Roman Missal*, © 2010, World Library Publications, p. 146). It tells of God's grace, manifested in mercy and pardon. It prompts us to ask: let us be children of the promise, heirs of heaven.

The well known song of John Newton played a part in the abolition of slavery throughout the British Empire in 1807. It declares that grace is amazing, is sweet sounding, is saving. Our theology tells us, first, it is a free and undeserved gift. Second, it gives us this list: sanctifying (a share in divine life), actual (a help to conform our lives to God's will), sacramental (proper to each of the Seven Sacraments), and special. These special graces or charisms are given to an individual to be used for the common good of the Church and the world.

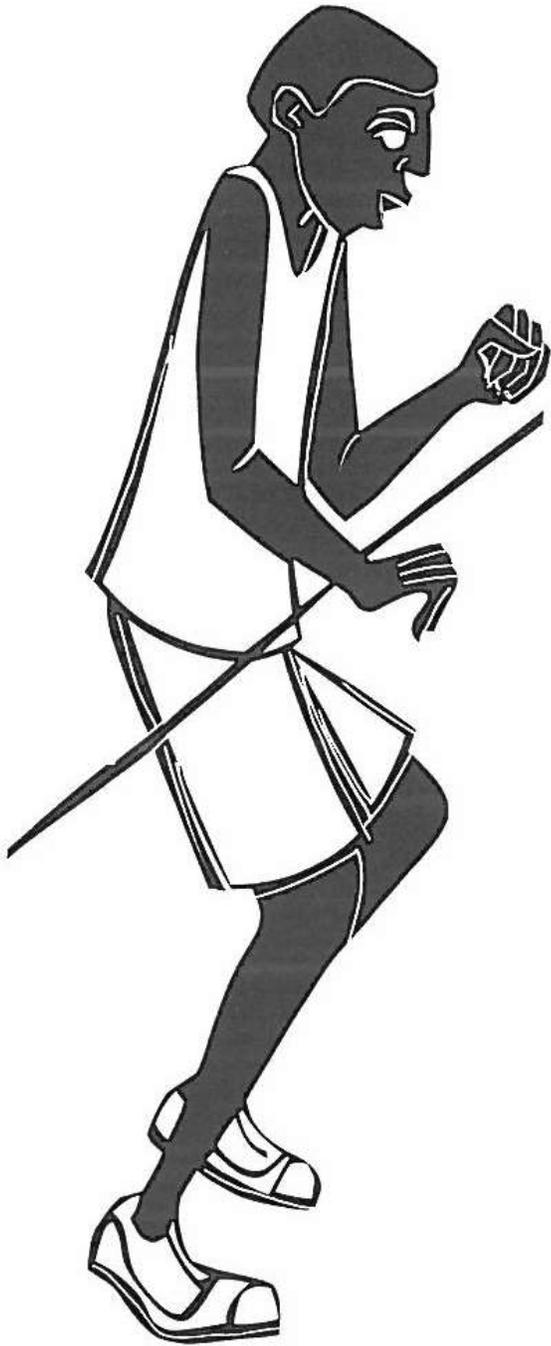
Because God gives, and abundantly so, what spiritually given special graces, distinctive gifts (charisms that everyone has as kingdom treasure) must I show, exhibit, manifest, do?

Prayer:

Bountiful God, in you there is no scarcity; only abundance. Let each of us, your daughters and sons, manifest the living presence of your grace in every thought, word, and action.

Submitted by:
Eliot Kapitan
Director for Worship and the Catechumenate
Diocese of Springfield in Illinois

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TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Collect:

O God, who manifest your almighty power
above all by pardoning and showing mercy,
bestow, we pray, your grace abundantly upon us
and make those hastening to attain your promises
heirs to the treasures of heaven.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Reflection:

As the liturgical year begins to draw to a close, the idea of the next life and our hope to join in the heavenly banquet rises to the surface. It is possible that this Collect is based upon the freely given gifts of God's mercy and forgiveness of our sins, thus allowing us, his sons and daughters, to "run the race" and obtain the great treasure God has in store for us.

Prayer:

Gracious God, as we journey through life on earth, help us to keep our sights on the great treasures you have in store for us in the next life. Inspire us to share the riches of this life with the less fortunate so as to enable us to obtain the inheritance you have for your sons and daughters who rely on you for all that is of value.

Submitted by:

Fr. Duane Wachowiak

Pastor and Diocesan Worship Commission Member

Diocese of Saginaw

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TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Prayer after Communion:

May this heavenly mystery, O Lord,
restore us in mind and body,
that we may be coheirs in glory with Christ,
to whose suffering we are united
whenever we proclaim his Death.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Reflection:

Our gifts of bread and wine are changed, by God's action, into this heavenly mystery. In this mystery – Paschal and heavenly – we are united to Christ. In this mystery – Suffering, Death, and Resurrection of Christ – is living presence within us.

Sometimes in our suffering, our “yes” or “no” does not always mean yes or no. Through the Eucharist, we receive the grace that allows us to “change our minds” and be restored in mind and body so that we can always remain united to him and, thus united to him, coheirs in glory with him.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we pray that we always long for the food that nourishes and transforms us to do what is pleasing to you and brings us to everlasting life.

Submitted by:
Sylvia M. Garcia
Associate Director, Office of Worship
Diocese of Dallas

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TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Collect:

Almighty ever-living God,
who in the abundance of your kindness
surpass the merits and the desires of those who entreat you,
pour out your mercy upon us
to pardon what conscience dreads
and to give what prayer does not dare to ask.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Reflection:

This prayer is from the ancient seventh century *Gelasian Sacramentary*. It begins with an eloquent reminder that God's kindness is far beyond our merits and prayers. There is no room for any Pelagian or semi-Pelagian theology (which lead the Church to clarify original sin and divine grace).

What little fruit our efforts have been able to bring about is eclipsed by the mercy of God which is poured upon us. This mercy will also forgive what our conscience fears. We often question our worthiness before God. It is he who assures us of his goodness. And what is more, he will give us what we do not presume to ask. What good news! God, in his mercy, not only forgives our sins, but returns to us the comfort of knowing we are worthy of fellowship with him and all the good things which we may need.

The Entrance Antiphon reminds us that "there is none that can resist your will." And the Communion Antiphon prays that "the Lord is good to those who hope in him, to the soul that seeks him."

Prayer:

God, we trust that your love and mercy is efficacious and never fatiguing. Let us but hope in your goodness to supply all we need.

Submitted by:
Rev. Leon Strieder, SLD
St. Mary's Seminary, Houston, Texas
Diocese of Austin

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TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Prayer after Communion:

Grant us, almighty God,
that we may be refreshed and nourished
by the Sacrament which we have received,
so as to be transformed into what we consume.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection:

We call on God to reinvigorate our lives and give us the sustenance that will nourish our body, mind, and spirit. Our prayer is offered in faith, with the hope of becoming, as St. Augustine tells us, that which we have received. “The prayer was newly composed for the post-Vatican II missal. It quotes the end of Leo the Great’s Sermon 63, where he says that we pass into the Communion we take, carrying the risen Christ with us” (Paul Turner, *Pastoral Companion to the Roman Missal*, © 2010, World Library Publications, p. 148).

We bring our whole selves to the Eucharist and place our joys and burdens on the altar of sacrifice. As Jesus offers them to the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit, we enter into and become the mystery that we celebrate by the power of the Risen Lord and the work of the Holy Spirit. Thus, we are restored and fed, not for our own sakes, but rather to become the hands and feet of Christ for the sake of others. Refreshed and nourished, we are sent forth to love more profoundly and to serve more intensely.

Prayer:

May we who gather at the table of God’s Word and feast around the altar of sacrifice, be restored to our innocence and strengthened by the Bread of Life so that we may become the Christ for those who are broken, poor, sick, and burdened.

Submitted by:
David J. Reilly
Director, Office of Worship
Diocese of Kalamazoo

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TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Collect:

May your grace, O Lord, we pray,
at all times go before us and follow after
and make us always determined
to carry out good works.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Reflection:

This prayer is part of the 8th century collection from Pope Hadrian I. It was used for morning and evening (see Paul Turner, *Pastoral Companion to the Roman Missal*, © 2010, World Library Publications, p. 150).

Grace. It is the Virgin whom we acknowledge to be full of grace. Oh, to be bathed in and surrounded by grace. Oh, to be led and followed by grace. Oh, to be full of grace like her.

But that is what we are: full of grace. Bathed in God at Baptism. Then clothed in Christ. And illumined by him. So that we may look like him, act like him, and be like him. We know and we believe that Baptism is less for membership and more for mission.

We are full of grace at God's own choosing. After eating and drinking the Body and Blood of Christ, we are strengthened to put our hands and feet, our heads and hearts to kingdom work. That is why we are charged at Mass end: "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life."

Prayer:

Gracious God, fill us with your life and grace, that we may always be your good people doing good.

Submitted by:
Eliot Kapitan
Director for Worship and the Catechumenate
Diocese of Springfield in Illinois

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TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Prayer after Communion:

We entreat your majesty most humbly, O Lord,
that, as you feed us with the nourishment
which comes from the most holy Body and Blood of your Son,
so you may make us sharers of his divine nature.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Reflection:

The source of the text comes from one of the daily prayers in the *Verona Sacramentary*. The prayer captures the balance of God's transcendence and immanence that we strive to express in every celebration of the Liturgy. Beginning with a humble address, we may envision God enthroned, our heads bowed down in reverence. Yet we are speaking to the one who feeds us and takes care of our every need – quite an intimate and personal relationship.

This prayer calls to mind elements of the Eucharistic Prayer where we express our faith in the transformative power of the Holy Spirit. We call on God to send God's Spirit to transform bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. And when we receive this sacred meal, we then are united in Christ, truly sharers in Christ's divine nature. Once more in this post-Communion prayer we voice this hope.

Prayer:

Good and gracious God, as we are refreshed and renewed at each celebration of the Eucharist by the gift of your Son's Body and Blood, guide us to a deeper realization of your presence and the awesome reality that we, the Body of Christ, celebrate each Liturgy with Christ our Head.

Submitted by
Judy Bullock, EdD
Director of Worship
Archdiocese of Louisville

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TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Collect:

Almighty ever-living God,
grant that we may always conform our will to yours
and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Reflection:

In the *Gelasian Sacramentary* from the 7th century, this prayer was used on a Sunday late in Easter Time. It was also a common Collect and a Prayer after Communion (see Paul Turner, *Pastoral Companion to the Roman Missal*, © 2010, World Library Publications, p. 152).

What is the will of God for me? This is a frequent question. In living our lives, we are never far from seeking and conforming our will to his. Wherever we are led to serve, we do so because of the call we have received and answered. This call by God brings us to witness to his life as we live out our own.

Following God's will is the beginning of our service. It can only be fulfilled when we are no longer the center of attention. When we look beyond the person doing the service to the one who generates the impulse for that service, then the result becomes a reflection of God's will. And for the one who is ministering with sincerity of heart, the service takes on a completely new image reflecting God's generous and majestic heart.

Prayer:

O God, you are the energy in our lives of service. As we minister to others and announce through our work your will for us, keep us centered, as you did for your early followers, on the objective of our service – being your hands, feet, and face in our world today.

Submitted by:
Sister Sharon Marie Stola, OSB, D.Min.
Director of the Office of Divine Worship and the Catechumenate
Diocese of Joliet-in-Illinois

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TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Prayer after Communion:

Grant, O Lord, we pray,
that, benefiting from participation in heavenly things,
we may be helped by what you give in this present age
and prepared for the gifts that are eternal.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection:

Here is an old prayer; at least part of it is old. It is based on one found in the *Verona Sacramentary* of the 6th century for an ordination of a Bishop (see Paul Turner, *Pastoral Companion to the Roman Missal*, © 2010, World Library Publications, p. 152).

Heavenly things are not far off. We participate in them this day, not only here in this sacred place, this parish church, but in all the places in the world where we spend the rest of our week. It is the same Christ who is wholly present and active here, there, and everywhere.

Heavenly things are not far off. Make a list. Count the benefits. And as good as all this is in the present age – and it is very good, God says – it pales in the brilliance of gifts that are eternal. Make a new list. Count those benefits.

We live actively in this present age and love it well we also keep one eye on Heaven and long for that gift, that place, That Day.

Prayer:

O God of earth and Heaven, because of this Communion
help us stay focused on that one day of eternal life with you
as we serve the men and women of this age this day.

Submitted by:
Eliot Kapitan
Director for Worship and the Catechumenate
Diocese of Springfield in Illinois

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THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Collect:

Almighty ever-living God,
increase our faith, hope and charity,
and make us love what you command,
so that we may merit what you promise.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Reflection:

This Collect comes from the *Verona Sacramentary* of the 6th century. It asks for an increase of virtue, specifically the three theological virtues that St. Paul addresses in the letters to the Corinthians and Thessalonians.

By asking for an increase of faith, hope, and charity we acknowledge that we are not perfect, that we still have room to grow. We associate ourselves with the commands to love God and to love neighbor (Matthew 22:34-40, Year A Gospel), with the blind man's desire to see (Mark 10:46-52, Year B), and with the humble tax collector acknowledging that he is a sinner, rather than with the Pharisee bragging about how perfect he is (Luke 18:9-14, Year C).

We also ask to make us love God's commands. This request emphasizes again our desire to be humble. We seek not so much to follow our own impulses and desires but to be docile and to follow the will of the Lord so that we may attain the promise of the kingdom.

Prayer:

Almighty God, all goodness comes from you. Strengthen our faith to accept your love so that we may carry out your will and come to share the life you promise.

Submitted by:
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**Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions [FDLC]
Mystagogical Reflection on Texts of the *Roman Missal***

Link to Mystagogy Project on FDLC home page for free access and use: <http://www.fdlc.org>.

THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Prayer after Communion

May your Sacraments, O Lord, we pray,
perfect in us what lies within them,
that what we now celebrate in signs
we may one day possess in truth.
Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection:

How beautifully this prayer from the *Gelasian Sacramentary* summarizes our understanding of symbol and Sacrament. Having just shared in the Body and Blood of Christ, we pray that we become perfectly transformed into what we have received. We acknowledge that what we celebrate in the Eucharist is still but a glimmer of what is to come, a reality of living in the “here but not yet”, an advent-time between the Resurrection of Christ and his coming again.

What lies within the Sacraments we share? What is it that we hope to possess fully in truth? Surely these are grace, the presence of God, the fullness of life and joy. Still, words cannot completely express our desire. So for now, we celebrate with a piece of bread, a sip of wine, and a song of praise on our lips. With eyes of faith, we call this the supper of the Lamb and the wedding feast of Christ, in the sure hope of possessing what we already have.

Prayer:

Help us, Lord, to see beyond the tangible things we need to recall your presence and the limited way we understand the limitless joy you have prepared for us, that we may always trust in your promise that, even now, is fulfilled for those who believe.

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